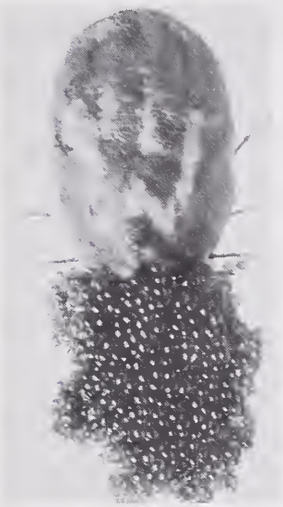
FIGHTING THE *Fever Tick*



3917B – Engorged female fever tick laying eggs. She drops to ground from host animal and may lay as many as 3500 eggs. Infection, if present in host, passes through eggs to seed ticks. Seed ticks spread disease to cattle on which they feed. Tick's life cycle may take 6 to 10 weeks in warm weather.

N – 22067 – Cattle in infested areas of Florida are dipped in approved concentration of chemical to kill ticks. Fifty to 100 cattle can be treated per hour in a 2000 – gallon vat. Ticks remaining in pasture and reinfesting animals are killed by subsequent dippings.

The fight against dangerous cattle fever ticks is underway again following the discovery of infestations in Florida this spring. The last tick outbreak occurred in that State in 1957.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture is cooperating with the Florida Livestock Board in a program of inspection, quarantine, and systematic dipping of cattle and horses. The plan calls for periodic inspection of all cattle and horses in the areas where tick infestations may be present. All infested animals are dipped in a tick-killing chemical at regular intervals over a period of at least 12 months.

Known as "Typhoid Mary" of the cattle world, this tick is a potential carrier of cattle tick fever, bovine piroplasmosis, a destructive blood disease. Presence of the tick is a grave menace to the cattle industry of the United States. It is particularly dangerous to the South, where warm weather favors its rapid reproduction.

No satisfactory treatment has been developed for tick fever. However, since the cattle fever tick is the only vector in this country, getting rid of the tick eliminates danger of the disease.

Apart from their role as disease carriers, cattle fever ticks injure cattle by sucking large amounts of blood. Heavily infested animals become emaciated and unprofitable; dairy cows produce less milk; young animals are retarded in growth; hides of tick infested cattle bring lower prices.

A 15 – state eradication program begun in 1907 against the tick was successfully terminated in 1943. Only a narrow buffer zone in parts of eight counties in Texas, along the lower Rio Grande River adjoining tick–infested areas in Mexico, has remained under constant Federal quarantine. California, which also has a common border with tick–infested areas in Mexico, has had periodic reinfestations, the last in 1956. Each of these has been wiped out. The current outbreak is the third in Florida since 1943 – – the others covered the periods 1945 – 1950, and 1957 – 1958.

Conquest of the cattle fever tick brought improvement in southern cattle and lifted the economy of the region. In Florida, the livestock industry now ranks close to the top as a profitable enterprise with an income estimated at more than $217 million for 1959.

Continued growth of the South's livestock industry may be assured only by vigorous action to stamp out new attacks of the cattle fever tick and other pests of livestock.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

Picture Story No. 128
August 1960

Inspector examines cattle for ticks before dipping, while animals are in restraining chute. Ticks are usually found inside the thighs, flanks, forelegs, and along the belly and brisket. Ticks found must be identified. N-22072

Ticks found are examined carefully for identification as the species known to be potential carriers of cattle tick fever. Following identification specimens are sent to a central USDA laboratory for official confirmation. Bn-5077

Inspection for ticks is repeated while animals are in the dipping pen following each dipping. With the hair wet and flattened ticks can be readily seen on visible areas. N-22079

Animals are paint-marked for identification as they emerge after swimming through vat. Left shoulder is marked for first dipping, left side for the second, left hip for the third. This order is repeated on the opposite side. N-22047

Range riders check herds following each dipping to detect any animals that don't carry the current paint mark. This is a necessary precaution to make sure all animals are treated. N-22060

Shipments of livestock are checked by inspector to prevent the movement of tick-infested animals from the quarantine areas. Vehicles found to be carrying tick-infested cattle must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Bn-10920